

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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October 25, 2012

TO: Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: Phoenix Commons Senior Co-Housing Development, City of Oakland, Alameda County
(For Board consideration on November 5, 2012)

Project Summary

Project Applicant: Zimmerman + Associates

Project Representatives: Linda Herman, Linda Herman Associates; Jeff Zimmerman, Zimmerman + Associates; John Briscoe, Briscoe Ivester & Bazel LLP; Chris Zimmerman, Alameda Zimmerman Properties; Lauren Cook, Alameda Zimmerman Properties; Manuel Quintero, LandArc Landscape Architects; Cynthia Elliot, Jingtow Residents Association.

Project Site. The proposed project is located at 340 29th Avenue, in the City of Oakland, southeast of the Park Street Bridge along the Oakland Estuary. Currently, the majority of the 25,950-square-foot site is a parking lot, and there is no dedicated public access. The site has approximately 87 feet of shoreline frontage. Twenty-ninth Avenue runs along the western side of the property, terminating at the Estuary. Adjacent to the southern boundary of the property, a large wooden deck extends over the Oakland Estuary on pilings and over property owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps). The deck once supported a restaurant, which burned down in 2010. The deck surface is dilapidated and in need of extensive renovations. A dilapidated float for docking boats is connected to the existing deck. The applicant has obtained a lease from the Corps for the property beneath the deck and float.

Proposed Project and Public Access. The applicant proposes to construct a residential senior co-housing building consisting of 41 units to serve approximately 50 residents. The project would include parking for the residents and a 1,796-square-foot private terrace adjacent to the public access promenade. The proposed building would be 47 feet high adjacent to the public access area.

The project proposes to construct an 87-foot long (2,482-square-foot) public access promenade paralleling the Oakland Estuary. The promenade would range between approximately 27 and 32 feet in width between the private residential patio and the deck area. The applicant proposes to surface an approximately 12-foot wide portion of the public access promenade with wooden planks to match the neighboring public access pathway to the east. The applicant proposes to improve the terminus of 29th Avenue by adding removable bollards, four trees in removable planter boxes, and extending the boardwalk west from the public access promenade. The applicant will also repave the asphalt on a portion of the street and provide an 8-foot sidewalk within the existing City-owned public right-of-way.



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The resurfaced, 2,867-square-foot deck over the Estuary would be used for public access for the length of applicant's lease with the Corps. The applicant proposes to install a 42-inch high railing and gate that would be located between the public promenade and deck. The gate would be open during the day to provide a 30-foot opening and would be closed at night for security. No private uses are proposed for the deck. The float would be replaced with a new private boat-docking facility, as allowed by applicant's lease with the Corps.

Bay Plan Policies. The *San Francisco Bay Plan's* policies on Public Access state that "in addition to the public access to the Bay provided by waterfront parks, beaches, marinas, and fishing piers, maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline, whether it be for housing, industry..." The public access policies also state that "a proposed fill project should increase public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible" and that the public access improvements "...should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline..." The policies state that the *Public Access Design Guidelines* should be used as a guide for siting and designing public access consistent with a proposed project. The Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design and Scenic Views further state that "all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay" and that "maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, from the Bay itself, and from the opposite shore."

Board Advice. The Board's advice is sought on the following four issues and questions:

1. **Does the project provide adequate, usable and attractive public access?** The Board should advise on whether the size and configuration of the proposed public access is adequate, given the size of the proposed building, the proposed use for senior housing, and the existing shoreline access to the east. The Board should also advise on whether the proposed public access amenities, such as seating, trash receptacles, lighting, and landscaping are sufficient and appropriate for the projected users.
2. **Are the connections to the proposed public access area adequate to lead the public to and along the shoreline?** The Board's view is sought on whether the access is sufficiently wide, inviting, and interesting given the site's position at the entrance to a long stretch of shoreline access. The Board should advise on whether the proposed project provides clear and continuous transitions between the neighboring property to the east and the foot of 29th Avenue to the west and clearly reads as public space.
3. **Do the proposed railing, gates, and night closures diminish the value of the public access area?** The Board's view on how to maximize the public use of the deck is sought. Are the proposed railing, gate and night closures necessary and do they reduce the value of the area for public access.
4. **Is the division between the private patio and public promenade appropriately designed to create a sense of comfort for both the public and private users of the space?** The Board should advise on whether both public and private users would feel welcome and comfortable in the proposed outdoor spaces.